United Nations E/1999/L.22

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: Limited
13 July 1999

Original: English

Substantive session of 1999
Geneva, 5–30 July 1999
Agenda item 14 (h)
Social and human rights questions: human rights

Extract from the report of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on its twentieth session: programme budget implications of the draft decision recommended by the Committee for adoption by the Council

Statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 31 of the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council

I. Request of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

1. At its twentieth session, held at Geneva from 26 April to 14 May 1999, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recommended the following decision for adoption by the Economic and Social Council:

> "The Economic and Social Council, concerned that existing meeting arrangements for the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights no longer permit it to fully discharge its responsibilities under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and Council resolution 1985/17 in an efficient and timely manner, and noting that the effectiveness and profile of the work of the Committee will be further enhanced by holding one of its annual sessions in New York, approves the holding, on a regular basis, of one additional three-week session of the Committee, as well as a pre-sessional working group meeting of one week's duration, in New York, beginning during 2000" (E/1999/L.19, annex).

2. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights normally holds two three-week sessions per year, in April/May and November/December, respectively. A pre-sessional working group meets for one week immediately after the conclusion of each session. Travel and daily subsistence allowance (DSA) are paid to the 18 members of the Committee attending the annual sessions, and DSA only is paid to an average of five members participating in the pre-sessional working group meetings.

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3. Provisions have been included under sections 22 (Human rights) and 2 (General Assembly affairs and conference services) of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 for two annual sessions of the Committee and two annual pre-sessional working group meetings.

II. Additional requirements for the biennium 2000–2001

4. Should the Council adopt the draft decision recommended by the Committee, additional provisions under the regular budget would be required as follows: (a) US$ 429,100 for the travel and daily subsistence allowance of the 18 members of the Committee attending the additional annual sessions in 2000 and 2001; (b) US$ 28,300 for the daily subsistence allowance of five members of the Committee participating in the additional annual pre-sessional working group meetings in 2000 and 2001; and (c) US$ 127,700 for the travel and DSA costs of six Geneva-based staff of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights travelling to New York to service the additional annual sessions in 2000 and 2001.

5. The conference-servicing requirements for the additional sessions and the meetings of the working group in 2000 and 2001 would amount to US$ 1,948,600 at full cost. A breakdown of the costs for travel, daily subsistence allowance and conference services is provided in the annex.

III. Conclusions and recommendations

A. Venue of the additional session

6. It will be recalled that by its decision 1985/17 of 28 May 1985, the Economic and Social Council decided that the venue of Committee sessions should alternate between Geneva and New York. However, in section VII of its resolution 40/252 of 18 December 1985, the General Assembly invited the Council to reconsider its decision to allow the Committee to meet in New York. Subsequently, by its decision 1986/102 of 7 February 1986, the Council decided that sessions of the Committee should be held at Geneva. Therefore, should the Council endorse the present draft decision, the holding of the additional annual session of the Committee in New York would imply an exception to Council decision 1986/102.

B. Programme of work

7. The programme of work included under section 22 (Human rights) of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000– 2001 (see A/54/6 (Sect. 22), sect. C.2) would be modified as follows:

Subprogramme 2

Supporting human rights bodies and organs

Outputs

22.66

(a) Servicing of international and expert bodies

(ii) Parliamentary documentation

d. Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Additional 18 concluding observations on State reports, 18 lists of issues relating to country reports and one report on the status of ratification of the Covenant and on the status of submission of reports by States parties;

(iii) Technical servicing

c. Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Additional 30 plenary meetings of the Committee and 20 meetings of its pre-sessional working group;

C. Conference-servicing costs

8. The estimates of US$ 1,948,600, at full cost, for the conference-servicing costs related to the holding of the additional annual sessions of the Committee and meetings of its pre-sessional working group in New York are based on the theoretical assumption that no part of the conference-servicing requirements would be met from within the permanent conference-servicing capacity included under section 2 (General Assembly affairs and conference services) of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001. The extent to which the Organization's permanent conference-servicing capacity would need to be supplemented by temporary assistance resources can be determined only in the light of the calendar of conferences and meetings for 2000–2001. Provision has, however, been included under section 2 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001, not only for meetings programmed at the time of budget preparations but also for meetings which might be authorized subsequently, provided that the number and distribution of meetings and conferences are consistent with the pattern of meetings of past years. As a result, no additional appropriation would be required under section 2 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001.

9. As regards the date of the additional session in New York, based on the pattern of meetings and historical workload at Headquarters it is proposed that the meeting be held sometime between August and early September during the period preceding the opening of the regular session of the General Assembly. The actual schedule will be determined within the context of the overall calendar of meetings for the biennium.

D. Contingency fund

10. No resources have been included under section 22 (Human rights) of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 to cover the travel and DSA requirements of US$ 585,100 relating to the holding of the additional annual sessions of the Committee and its annual pre-sessional working group meetings in 2000 and 2001 in New York. It is not anticipated at this juncture that these requirements could be absorbed within the

provisions proposed for section 22 (Human rights) of the programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001.

11. It will be recalled that under the procedures established by the General Assembly in its resolutions 41/213 of 19 December 1986 and 42/211 of 21 December 1987, a contingency fund is established for each biennium to accommodate additional expenditures derived from legislative mandates not provided for in the programme budget. Under this procedure, if additional expenditures are proposed that exceed the resources available from the contingency fund, the activities concerned can be implemented only through redeployment of resources from low-priority areas or modifications of existing activities. Otherwise, such additional activities will have to be deferred to a later biennium.

12. With regard to the travel and DSA requirements of $585,100, it is not possible, at this stage, to identify activities within section 22 (Human rights) of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 that could be terminated, deferred, curtailed or modified during the biennium to finance the costs of the additional meetings of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

13. Should the Economic and Social Council decide to adopt the draft decision contained in document E/1999/L.19, annex, an additional provision of US$ 585,100 would be required over and above the resources proposed under section 22 (Human rights) of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001. The provision of $585,100 would represent a charge against the contingency fund, and as such would require a related additional appropriation.

Annex

I. Section 22 (Human rights)

	2000	2001
	(United States dollars)	
Travel and per diem of the 18 members attending the proposed additional annual sessions of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	212 000	217 100
Daily subsistence allowance of five members attending the annual meetings of the pre-sessional working group	14 000	14 300
Travel and daily subsistence allowance of six staff members of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to New York to service the annual sessions of the Committee	63 100	64 600
Total	**289 100**	**296 000**

II. Section 2 (General Assembly affairs and conference services)

	2000	2001
	(United States dollars)	
Pre-sessional Working Group		
(one week annually)		
Meeting services		
(E, F, R, S) 10 meetings	39 100	40 000
Pre-session documentation		
(E, F, R, S) 600 pages, 18 documents	354 500	363 000
Post-session documentation		
(E, F, R, S) 40 pages, 6 documents	24 300	24 900
Other requirements	6 100	6 200
Total I	**424 000**	**434 100**
Session of the Committee		
(three weeks annually)		
Meeting services		
(A, E, F, R, S) 30 meetings	153 900	157 600
Pre-session documentation		
(A, E, F, R, S) 50 pages, 5 documents	39 400	40 300
In-session documentation		
(A, E, F, R, S) 90 pages, 10 documents	69 700	71 400

	2000	*2001*
	(United States dollars)	
Post-session documentation		
(A, E, F, R, S) 30 pages, 6 documents	24 000	24 600
Summary records		
(E, F, S)	233 500	239 100
Other requirements	18 300	18 700
Total II	**538 800**	**551 700**
Grand total (I + II)	**962 800**	**985 800**